

With the May 30 deadline fast approaching, U.S. Representative Sanford Bishop is urging residents of eight southwest Georgia counties who suffered property losses as a result of the recent tornadoes to apply for federal Small Business Administration (SBA) disaster loans as soon as possible.

The Second District Congressman said SBA physical loss loans are available to qualified residents who file for the assistance before the deadline at the end of May in Mitchell, Baker, Colquitt, Decatur, Dougherty, Grady, Thomas and Worth counties. In addition, he explained, residents in these eight counties who suffered tornado-related economic losses have until the end of the year to file applications for SBA economic injury loans.

The SBA has opened a Disaster Loan Assistance Office at the Camilla City Hall, 30 West Broad Street, fourth floor, which is open from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, Representative Bishop said. He said SBA staff workers can answer questions, provide assistance, take applications, and direct people to other forms of assistance if they do not qualify for the agency's disaster loans.

"The SBA has received fewer than 100 applications so far, and has approved more than half of those that have been fully processed," the Congressman reported. "The families and business people who suffered losses need and deserve all the help they can get, and I urge them to inquire about the possibility of SBA assistance as soon as possible."

The tornadoes struck the area in March, causing many injuries and loss of life and leaving widespread property destruction in its wake.